

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method of provisioning one or more software resources of an aggregated service in a
2 computing network, comprising steps of:

3 defining a provisioning interface of the aggregated service;

4 specifying the provisioning interface in a service description document;

5 obtaining credentials of a user of the aggregated service, according to the service
6 description document;

7 analyzing the obtained credentials; and

8 allowing the user to perform the aggregated service if indicated by the analyzing step.

1 2. The method according to Claim 1, further comprises the step of: registering the service
2 description document in a registry.

1 3. The method according to Claim 2, further comprising the steps of:

2 defining a provisioning interface of at least one of the one or more software resources of
3 the aggregated service; and

4 for each of the at least one software resource, specifying the provisioning interface of a
5 service performed by the software resource in the service description document or in one or more
6 other service description documents.

1 4. The method according to Claim 3, wherein the step of obtaining credentials of the user of
2 the aggregated service also obtains credentials for the at least one software resource, according to

the service description document or the one or more other service description documents; and
further comprising the step of allowing the user to perform selected services represented
by the provisioning interfaces of the at least one software resource, if indicated by the analyzing
step.

5. The method according to Claim 4, further comprising the step of obtaining operation-
specific credentials of the user, and wherein the step of allowing the user to perform selected
services depends on the operation-specific credentials of the selected service.

6. The method according to Claim 4, wherein the analyzing step comprises at least one of (1)
authentication and (2) authorization of the credentials.

7. The method according to Claim 1, wherein identity information is programmatically
relayed among distributed services performed by the software resources of the aggregated service.

8. The method according to Claim 7, wherein the programmatic relaying comprises sending a
message which specifies the credentials in a header of the message and a service request in a body
of the message.

9. The method according to Claim 8, wherein the message is a SOAP ("Simple Object
Access Protocol") message.

1 10. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the service description document is specified in
2 a markup language.

1 11. The method according to Claim 10, wherein the markup language is Web Services
2 Description Language ("WSDL").

1 12. The method according to Claim 2, wherein the registry is a network-accessible registry
2 accessed using standardized messages.

1 13. A system for provisioning one or more software resources of an aggregated service in a
2 computing network, comprising:

3 means for defining a provisioning interface of the aggregated service;

4 means for specifying the provisioning interface in a service description document;

5 means for obtaining credentials of a user of the aggregated service, according to the
6 service description document;

7 means for analyzing the obtained credentials; and

8 means for allowing the user to perform the aggregated service if indicated by the means
9 for analyzing.

1 14. A computer program product for provisioning one or more software resources of an
2 aggregated service in a computing network, the computer program product embodied on one or
3 more computer-readable media and comprising:

4 computer-readable program code means for defining a provisioning interface of the
5 aggregated service;

6 computer-readable program code means for specifying the provisioning interface in a
7 service description document;

8 computer-readable program code means for obtaining credentials of a user of the
9 aggregated service, according to the service description document;

10 computer-readable program code means for analyzing the obtained credentials; and

11 computer-readable program code means for allowing the user to perform the aggregated
12 service if indicated by the computer-readable program code means for analyzing.